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Istanbul "Drug-Beat-Rob" Crimes

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19 Jun 2006

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The Regional Security Office at the U.S. Consulate Istanbul reported the following:

In the month of May, two American and 13 non-American tourists became the victims of "drug-beat-rob" crimes.

"Drug-beat-rob" crimes generally come about when an English-speaking local approaches a lone tourist. The local will offer the lone tourist a cup of coffee, a soda and sometimes dinner. The offered beverage is drugged and the unsuspecting tourist becomes unconscious after consumption. The criminal, sometimes acting with a larger group, will steal all of the foreigner's valuables. In some cases, the victim has been assaulted until the pin numbers to debit and credit cards are revealed. In this way, these criminals have also be able to steal large amounts of money from bank accounts.

The Turkish National Police recently arrested ten individuals thought to be involved with a well-established criminal organization specializing in these crimes. Most notably, a travel agent that preyed on unsuspecting foreign tourists was implicated and arrested with this group.

Four or five years ago, such cases were common in Turkish tourist areas. These recent incidents have been the first such cases of "drug-beat-rob" crimes reported in recent years. It should also be noted that such crimes have also been reported in other Eastern European cities.

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